Northwest Washington Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Soundings

Vol. 28, Issue 1 January 2012

I Am A Map Guy

by Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers, Bethany on Bainbridge Island

Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers

I have always enjoyed maps. It is an inherited trait, a love traced easily to the wander-lust of my parents, and reinforced by the image of my father pouring over maps of all types. I think my appreciation for maps comes from wanting to see the big picture, the desire to envision new horizons, and a curiosity to understand better how things relate to each other. One of the first things Laurie and I did upon moving to the Pacific Northwest was to gather a collection of maps from the many places we first visited, and the places we hoped to visit soon. It helped us to better acquaint ourselves with our new environment, to develop a sense of place.

When Mapquest was first introduced, and then when GPS devices became prevalent, I thought they detracted from the important place maps have in our lives. These tools imposed their directions upon us, and irritating voices would guide us, and made us feel somehow that maps had no place in our world. They even progressed to giving us options for our routes, and took on a polite tone in redirecting our inability to follow their directions: "Recalculating," the voice would gently say...but I knew she was

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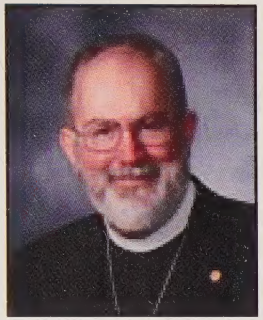
A Word From The Bishop



The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger

You will be electing members to the 2012 Synod Assembly in the coming months. I know that some of you have elections in the fall, but most elect at meetings in January and February. The theme and activities for this year's assembly are being developed as I write this. This much is known. Mark Allen Powell from Trinity Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, will be our speaker. His presentations will focus on the *Lutheran use of scripture in the 21st century.*

This year's assembly will also focus on selecting leaders for the future. One half of the Synod Council will be elected. The position of treasurer could be elected or we could adopt a constitutional amendment that would make the treasurer's position a position elected by the Synod Council. We will be electing a secretary to fill an unexpired term. We will elect ten members for the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Pittsburg, Penn. These members will have the usual duties of assembly members, but will also be casting ballots for the Presiding Bishop and the Secretary of the ELCA.

Now is the time to begin thinking about who you would like to lead us on the Synod Council and who should be our representatives at the churchwide assembly. We are calling people to serve in these offices and positions. We should be praying for them even as we select them. It is also time to submit nominations for those whom we would like to see serve in these positions. In this synod it is permissible to nominate oneself if that seems to be a place where you might serve the church.

It is also the time to be thinking about the resolutions you would like the synod assembly to consider. Recently we have seen resolutions arrive at the last minute at the assembly. It is more helpful, and it guarantees that the resolution will be acted upon, if these resolutions

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are submitted by the deadline of March 1. I encourage clusters to meet as the members to the Synod Assembly are chosen to discuss the resolutions and to share ideas about who should lead us into the future.

For some the Synod Assembly is not what you think about in January. It is my conviction that we do our best work when we plan for the assembly and when everyone knows what is coming to the assembly so that we have opportunity to talk with others about the decisions that will be made.

This synod is continuing to reach out with new and renewing ministries. We are preparing leaders for the future on all of the rosters of the church. It is through the leadership of the Assembly, Synod Council and churchwide assembly that this work is supported and governed. I invite your prayers and thoughtful preparation as you elect those who will serve.

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Deadline for copy for the February 2012 issue of Soundings is Wednesday, January 4.
Current and archived issues can be found on the synod's website.

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Safe Parking

At Our Redeemer's in Ballard

On September 25, members at Our Redeemer's in Seattle unanimously approved the following resolution:

"Our Redeemer's will help launch a successful Safe Parking program that can be a template for other churches in ministering to the homeless population."

Beginning in January 2012, Our Redeemer's will provide space in their parking lot 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for 1-5 homeless families living in their vehicles. The congregation will also provide resources for daily living, the use of the fellowship hall and restroom, hygiene supplies, mail and trash removal. In return, campers will be expected to contribute in some way either through a small financial contribution or by helping with church clean-up or maintenance.

Initially neighbors were concerned, but when they realized the campers would be screened and limited to no more than five vehicles their fears were eased.

A $20,000 grant from the City of Seattle and $10,000 from the State will help pay for the case management services, who will screen and assist campers to find permanent housing. Currently there is a two-year wait for permanent subsidized housing. Our Redeemer's is the first congregation in Ballard who has agreed to host the car campers and the hope is that other congregations will also participate in this program.

To learn more about this pilot program, contact Pastor Kathy Hawks or Pastor Steve Grumm at 206-783-7900.

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I Am A Map Guy

thinking something less genteel about me.

My love for maps was reinforced during my recent "exercising our faith" ("pedaling for pledges") excursion throughout our region on my bicycle. Yes, Jim Rohrscheib did a masterful job routing my five days of riding from Bethany household to Bethany household, giving minute detailed directions to each home. But I always carried a map with me, not so much mistrusting Jim's directions, but moreover to get a sense of the big picture, of how houses and neighborhoods were in relation to one another. It also came in handy when I felt a bit adventurous, and investigated shortcuts through "uncharted" areas.

Moreover, in these webs of our stewardship travels, I recognize tapestries, those elegant fabrics made beautiful by their connections and by their variety. I see etched on the map a quilt, which for me always has the dual association with the love of my grandmother (those who have gone before us) and of our mission with Lutheran World Relief, extending hope and care throughout the world. And I can make out the pattern of a prayer shawl, blanketing our geographical region with the intimacy and concern of our crying out to God, for ourselves and for others.

Finally, I see each of you, and the faithfulness you express through your worship, your prayers, your involvement, your laughter, your generosity. And I have seen the pieces of that ministry in the homes I have visited, and I have seen how they are so connected and interrelated by gazing at my maps. And at the center, both literally and figuratively, we discover Bethany, the "community center" for Exercising our Faith. Thanks for joining in the spirit of this effort.

Pre-Retirement Seminar

Are you making the right decisions to help achieve your retirement dreams?

If you're within 15 years of retirement, attend an ELCA Board of Pensions Pre-Retirement Seminar and explore issues that form the foundation of a healthy retirement.

The seminar will take place from 1 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 9, and from 9 a.m. to noon on Feb. 10 at Dumas Bay Centre in Federal Way.

If you stay overnight the cost is $81* per person and includes room, Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and snacks. (Single rooms with single beds. All rooms have sinks; most rooms have half-baths and easy access to bathrooms and showers. Free wi-fi available throughout building.)

The cost for commuters is $38* per person and includes program, Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and snacks.

To register contact Allison at swwsynod@plu.edu or call 253-535-8300. Mail payment to SWWA Synod Office, 420 121st St, Tacoma, WA 98444.

*After Wednesday, Jan. 11, there will be a $10 late fee added to the registration.

Co-sponsored by Southwestern Washington and Northwest Washington Synods of the ELCA.

Have You Signed Up?

Have you signed up for Soul Café?

Soul Café is a social networking site and is for members, congregations, synods and organizations of Region 1.

Communication across and within the six synods of Region 1 is the primary focus of *Soul Café*. This social networking site will allow us to share ideas and have on-line discussions within our region.

Learn more at www.soulcafe.org.

Pastor Carol Jensen, St. John United in Seattle, with Kari Lipke, Intern for Faith Action Network and St. John United.

The Rev. Jim Leistikow, ret.; the Rev. Jan Nesse, Assistant to the Bishop; and Rachel Schoeld.

Synod Advent Open House

The the Synod Staff hosted an open house in early Advent for congregations' staff and rostered leaders (active and retired) to join together to celebrate the season of waiting. More than 150 people attended enjoying homemade treats such as lefse, crab dip and stuffed dates. Laughter and good conversation were also a big part of the afternoon festivities. Advent blessings from the Synod Staff.

Leyman Roberta Gbowee Her Story

"Every time the bold men rose up, they rose up with guns," says Liberian Lutheran Leymah Roberta Gbowee, winner of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize. Read Leymah's story by visiting www.elca.org and clicking on "Living Lutheran." (http://www.livinglutheran.com/stories/a-nonviolent-warrior-for-peace.html.)

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Our Chance For Savings

Congratulations! In 2011 more than 65 percent of eligible ELCA-primary plan members and spouses in our synod took the Mayo Health Assessment.

With that news your congregation and the synod saved two percent on medical costs: A total of $33,000 in savings.

Can this synod reach, or surpass, that goal in 2012?

The Mayo Clinic Health Assessment is confidential and takes about 15 minutes to complete. If you have recent lab results, great. If not, you can always fill in those numbers later.

The portal to take the assessment will open on January 1, 2012, at www.elcaforwellness.org. Find instructions in the *Understand My Benefits* section at www.elcabop.org. Once you complete the assessment you will earn $150 in your personal wellness account to offset out-of-pocket medical expenses.

Reminder: the ELCA *Board of Pension* is changing its name to *Portico Benefit Services*. This will take place during the next 12 to 18 months.

Flexible Spending Plan (FSA)

Employees with ELCA-primary health coverage who want a 2011 flexible spending account should return the enrollment form (signed by you). Final deadline, faxed or post-marked, is Dec. 31.

2012 Youth Gathering

Registration for the *2012 ELCA Youth Gathering* opened on October 9 and will close once 39,000 have registered. To learn more, visit www.elca.org.gathering.

Back In New Orleans

The Gathering will take place July 18 - 22 in New Orleans. The theme, *citizens with the saints*, is centered around Ephesians 2:14-20.

A Letter To You From Bishop Boerger

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

As many of you prepare for your annual meetings in January and February I want to bring to your attention the amendments to the model constitution for congregations that were adopted by the 2011 churchwide assembly. Please note how these can be adopted in accordance with required constitutional provision *C17.04 in the Model Constitution for Congregations: "This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council's recommendation, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. . . ."

When you act on these amendments I would ask that you send an updated constitution to the synod office for our files. It is important that these changes be reviewed by each congregation and I would encourage their adoption.

If you have questions, I would invite you to contact me prior to acting on these amendments at your annual meeting or at a future meeting of your congregation.

Blessed Advent,
Wm Chris Boerger
Bishop

Editor's Note: A link to the changes are posted on our website under Spotlight at www.lutheransnw.org.

Working Together For Mission

Requests for submission of the 2011 Parochial Report for your congregation are sent out in mid-December with a request that the completed report be submitted by February 15, 2012. The request comes with a copy of the blank form with your congregational ID number and password for submission on-line.

Please take a little time in early January to pull the information together from your Treasurer, Christian Education Director, and whoever maintains your membership roll, then go online and submit.

If you misplace the request, please call the synod office (206-783-9292; or 1-800-244-6997) and we will give you the password to get to the online form.

The information you provide gives the synod and churchwide valuable information for evaluating and planning the mission of this church. Thank you for taking the time to send in your report.

Trivia Bowl

The third annual Trivia Bowl to benefit El Camino de Emaus will be held at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 29, at Burlington Lutheran Church, 134 Victoria Ave., Burlington. (El Camino is this synod's Lutheran Hispanic outreach ministry located in Skagit County.)

For those new to the process, teams of up to six trivia experts register at a cost of $300 per team. They will be competing for the coveted trophy and bragging rights. All registration fees will go to the ministry of El Camino. Trivia categories are drawn from a variety of categories, i.e. history, popular culture, sports, science and more.

Registration forms will be mailed to every congregation in the synod. For more forms or for further information, please contact Pastor Walter Rice, Burlington Lutheran in Burlington, at 360-856-6181 or blc.pastor@frontier.com.

Here 'n There

- **Members at Mount Si in North Bend** are sharing Jesus Christ with needy children through Operation Christmas Child. This program brings joy and happiness to children in desperate situations around the world through gift-filled shoeboxes and the Good News of God's love.
- **Members at Faith in Redmond** collected more than 42 Thanksgiving Bags that were sent to men and women currently serving in the armed forces.
- **Luther Memorial in Seattle** hosted their first week as an overnight shelter for guests from Mary's Place (Nov. 29 - Dec. 6). The congregation provided a safe place for 2 moms and 11 children, ages eight months to 16 years old. Karen Olsen, who organized the event, said, "It was the most rewarding thing I have ever done. We got much more back then we gave." Members provided evening meals and breakfasts, and gave the guests a warm place to do homework, play games, read, relax and sleep.
- **Holy Spirit in Kirkland** will be hosting Tent City 4 from January 21 - April 21. The youth at Holy Spirit will cook and serve a meal for 75 men who temporarily call the Compass Center "home" on January 22.
- **Holy Trinity on Mercer Island** will hold a special worship service at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 18. This service will be a quiet celebration of the Christmas season and is being offered especially for those who, because of grief or some other heartache, would like a more quiet and reflective worship. It is also an opportunity to take a step back from all the hustle and bustle of the season and to experience the peace of worship and prayer.
- **Members of University in Seattle** are holding their annual *Walk With The Magi on the Day of Epiphany* (Friday, Jan. 6). They will gather for the Magi story at 6 p.m. at the church, followed by the journey of following the star to find baby Jesus. The walk will be

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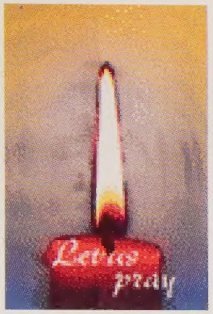
Within Our Family



We Continue To Hold In Our Prayers:

- **The Rev. Brian Beistel (ret.)**
- **The Rev. Mary Bosell,** on disability
- **The Rev. John Ericksen (ret.)** and his wife, Marita
- **Larry Johnson, Associate in Ministry and Holden Village Development Director**
- **The Rev. Phil Petrasek (ret.)** and his wife Linda
- **The Rev. Donna Reilly Williams (ret.)**
- **The Rev. Paul Wuest (ret.)**

We Pray For:

- **The family of Anna Hoiland, mother of Ann Thomas.** Anna died on November 20 surrounded by her family. Anna was the widow of the Rev. Theol S. Hoiland, retired ELCA pastor who died in August 2008. Theol served in both the Northwest Washington Synod and the Southwestern Washington Synod. A memorial service was held on November 26 at St. Mark's By the Narrows Lutheran Church in Tacoma. Cards can be sent to Pastor Larry and Ann Thomas at 170 - 5th Avenue N.W., Issaquah, WA 98027.
- **The family of the Rev. Charles Davis (ret.).** The Rev. Davis died on December 5. A memorial service was held at First Lutheran Church in Bothell on December 10. He is survived by his wife, Nancy. Cards may be sent to 18227 NE 176th St, Woodinville WA 98072.
- **The Rev. Bob Moylan and his wife Pat, Associate in Ministry.** They recently sent the synod an update on their health. They appreciate the notes and cards sent to them. Their address is: 1835 E. North Crescent, Spokane, WA 99207.

Positions Available

Coordinator Of Intergenerational Ministries

Central Lutheran Church, a vibrant, diverse and progressive congregation located in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, has an immediate opening for a Coordinator of Intergenerational Ministries. This full-time position's responsibilities are divided between three major areas: faith formation, volunteer coordination and outreach coordination. For more information visit www.loveiscentral.org.

Bookkeeper

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Mercer Island, is seeking a part time (20-25 hours per month) full cycle bookkeeper. The bookkeeper is responsible for providing monthly reports and communicating financial information to staff and leadership of the congregation. Qualified candidates will be proficient in QuickBooks and have experience in small business accounting. For more information or to apply, email: pastordeanna@htlcmi.org.

Christmas In China

The Rev. Dorcas Wang, ELCA missionary in China and on the Northwest Washington Synod's roster, wrote in the ELCA newsletter *Hand in Hand* about what Christmas means in a country where 23.05 million are Christian, but roughly 1.8 percent of the population.

"...Chinese congregations use Christmas as an opportunity to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ because they have most non-believing visitors during this time. Members are even asked to give their seats to visitors who have come to learn about Christianity..."

(Search for Winter 2011 *Hand in Hand,* the ELCA , on the ELCA website at www.elca.org.)